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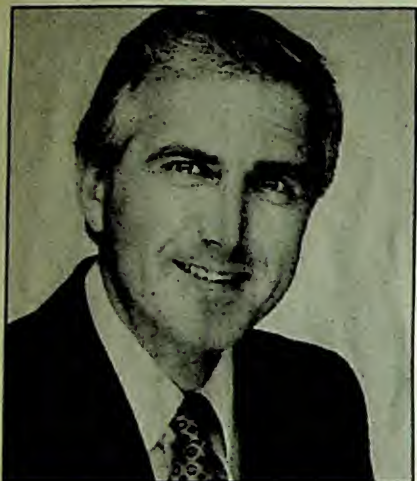
# A Miracle in the Making

The CCF-NDP in  
Saskatchewan

by Frank Vincent W. Plawucki



## Foreword



Roy Romanow, Leader  
Saskatchewan New Democrats

To plan for the future we must understand the past. *A Miracle in the Making* traces the history of our party from the rough coalition of farm and labour groups that came together in the 1930s right up to the present day.

Throughout our 60-year history we have fought for many just causes: hospitalization, rural electrification, better labour laws, control of our natural resources and medicare to name only a few. The essence of those "good fights" is included in these pages.

The CCFund and the author Mr. Plawucki are to be congratulated for undertaking this project. Trying to wrap up all the different pieces of our history in one small package is no easy task.

I hope that you read *A Miracle in the Making* and come away with a better understanding of our party, the Saskatchewan CCF-NDP.

*Roy Romanow.*



Eldon Anderson, Chair CCFund

The objective of the CCFund is to support research, education, communication and other activities which advance the cause of "humanity first". *A Miracle in the Making* is just one step along that road.

If after reading *A Miracle in the Making* you believe it is the kind of information you would like to share with others, simply fill out the form in the back and send it in with your cheque.

The CCFund would like to thank *The Commonwealth* for agreeing to give this issue a wider-than-normal distribution.

The challenge of building a new and better tomorrow is a responsibility we all share together. The CCFund provides us with an opportunity to do our part to ensure a brighter future for our children and their children. The flame lit by Woodsworth still lights the darkness. Let us keep that flame alive!

*Eldon Anderson*



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# Introduction

Severe economic conditions coupled with terrible agrarian climate (drought and grasshoppers) produced the social democratic movement in Western Canada.

*A Miracle in the Making* traces the path of this struggle by introducing the reader to the history of the Saskatchewan CCF-NDP; how the movement functions; and some of the people who fought to make it a reality.

Among those who encouraged me to trace the movement's history were Ed and Pemrose Whelan of Regina. A Regina MLA and cabinet minister, Ed Whelan sat in 23 sessions of the Saskatchewan Legislature, including the years of the medicare struggle. Pemrose Whelan wrote for many years in *The Commonwealth*, the official news organ of the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation-New Democratic Party. Their guidance was important and appreciated.

As we talked about medicare, economics, education, government programs...we always drifted back to CCF-NDP history.

One day while sitting in the public gallery at the Legislature, I decided the Whelans had given me an idea which should be pursued.

I grappled with it for several weeks when my wife, Janet, suggested I wouldn't rest until I had something on paper. That was the final push.

I would also like to thank the people at the Moose Jaw Public Library, the Saskatchewan Archives in Regina, and the Legislative Library.

A special thanks to Gaile Whelan Enns for reading the first draft of this project. Gaile's assistance and comments played an important part in the final manuscript.

As well, I would like to extend my thanks to the CCFund for agreeing to publish this manuscript. The work of the Fund, through its volunteer members, is greatly appreciated.



In closing, I wish to include a touch of Tommy Douglas wit. L. D. Lovick, who edited *Till Power Is Brought to Pooling: Tommy Douglas Speaks*, wrote: "The power of speech is an article of faith for Tommy Douglas." (1979, p.11)

Social democratic pioneers will remember Douglas as a powerful, mesmerizing orator - brilliant no matter what the topic.

In 1936 Douglas was the MP for Weyburn. In the House of Commons one day, Douglas was critical of Agriculture Minister James G. Gardiner (also an MP from Saskatchewan), and the Liberal agriculture program and agricultural estimates.

Finally the outraged Gardiner shouted: "What does my honourable friend know about it? He's not a farmer."

Douglas fired back: "And I never laid an egg either, but I know more about omelets than most chickens." (Lovick 1979, p.19)

It is my sincere wish that you, the reader, will enjoy this short story as much as I enjoyed preparing it.

Frank Vincent W. Plawucki  
1989

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# The Leaders

Co-operative Commonwealth Federation-New  
Democratic Party Leaders in Saskatchewan since 1932:



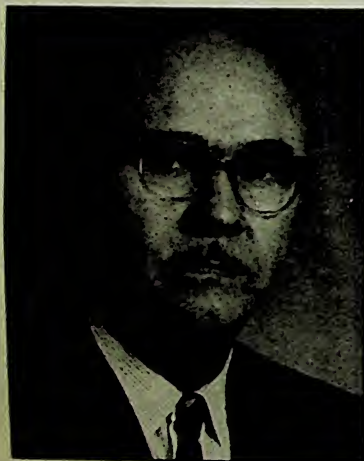
**M. J. Coldwell**  
1932-1934 (Farmer-Labour)  
Federal Leader 1944-1960



**George H. Williams**  
1934-1941



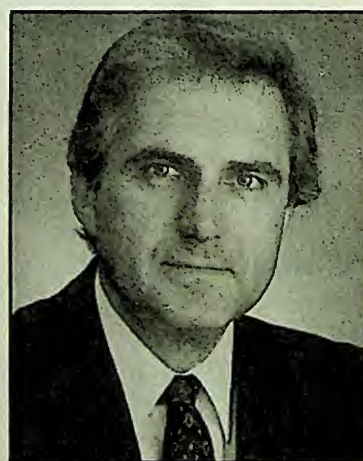
**T. C. Douglas** 1941-1961  
Premier 1944-1961  
Federal Leader 1961-1971



**Woodrow S. Lloyd**  
1961-1970  
Premier 1961-1964



**Allan E. Blakeney**  
1970-1987  
Premier 1971-1982



**Roy Romanow**  
1987-



# A Vision of Canada

Grasshoppers; Rust; Drought; Economic Exploitation.

These factors - more than anything - eroded the social and economic fibre of Western Canada people during the 1920s and 1930s.

During this time men and women of great vision and wisdom began a movement - a co-operative movement designed to rid the citizenry of capitalistic ills. The movement became known as the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation, more commonly the CCF.

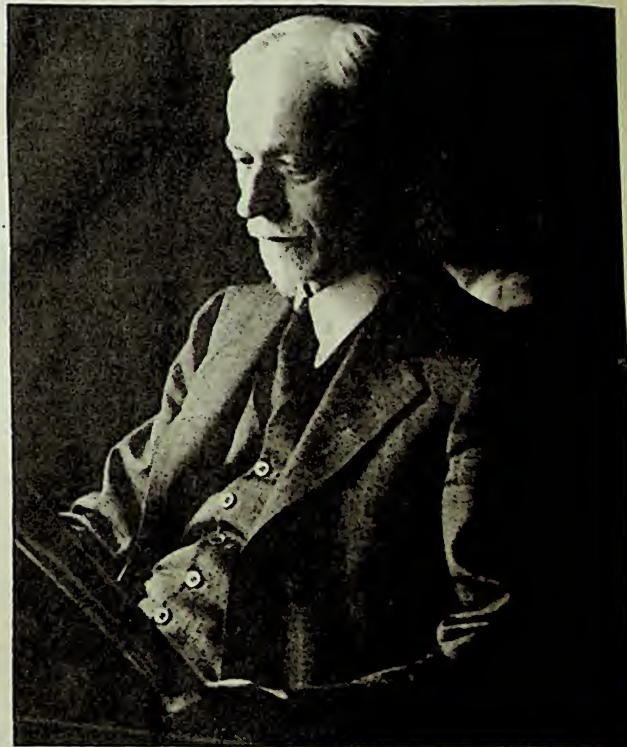
Economic and social conditions led to the Winnipeg General Strike in June 1919. The strike pitted labour leaders and their followers against government authority and employers. The bitter struggle revolved around collective bargaining rights.

Among those who participated in the strike was James Shaver Woodsworth, the man referred to as the father of social democracy in Canada. Woodsworth "took a sufficiently active interest" in the strike but he strongly opposed the approach taken by OBU (One Big Union) supporters. He always favored "a solution by peaceful legal means." (Christian et al 1974, p.126)

Within two years of the Winnipeg General Strike the Socialist Party of Canada consisted of several small groups.

Woodsworth insisted that change could be achieved in Canada "by means of education, organization and the securing by the workers of the machinery of government." (Morton 1974, p.11)

While it was in Saskatchewan the CCF had its first electoral success, the party's early emergence was at the federal level.



**J. S. Woodsworth**

A former Methodist minister, who had taken part in the Winnipeg Strike, he served as federal leader between 1932 and 1942. Although the majority of his colleagues supported Canada's participation in World War II, Woodsworth courageously and clearly stated his opposition as a pacifist.



In 1921 Woodsworth (Centre Winnipeg; later Winnipeg North Centre), William Irvine (Calgary East) and Joseph T. Shaw (Calgary West) were elected to the Canadian House of Commons as Labour MPs. Social democracy had made a breakthrough federally. The vision of a movement had become a reality, although there were many struggles in the years to come.

In 1924 Woodsworth forged close ties with the radical Progressives, most of whom were from Alberta. Progressives who were unhappy with the federal Liberal government of the day formed the Ginger Group under the leadership of Robert Gardiner (Acadia, Alberta). The Ginger Group co-operated with the Labour MPs, insisting that the federal government bring in legislation like the Old Age Pension Act in 1927.



**First Federal Caucus 1935:** T. C. (Tommy) Douglas and M. J. Coldwell from Saskatchewan joined leader J. S. Woodsworth in promoting the ideas of the new party in Ottawa. Left to right: Tommy Douglas, Angus MacInnis, A. A. Heaps, J. S. Woodsworth, M. J. Coldwell, Grace MacInnis (later an MP, but at the time caucus secretary), Grant MacNeill.

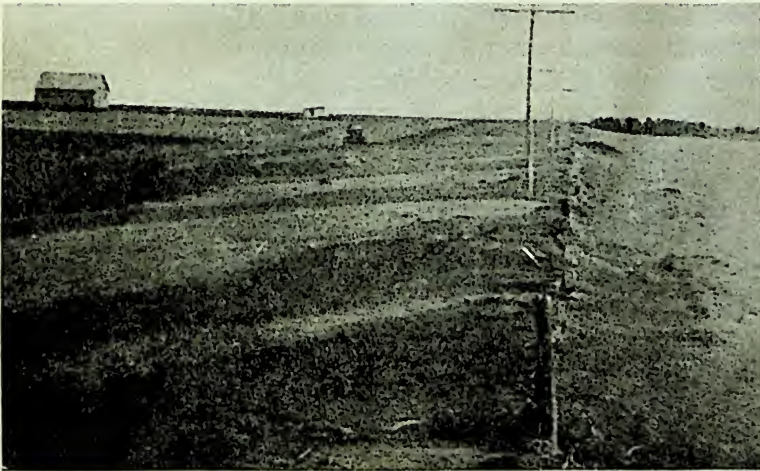
Later the CCF was responsible for insisting that the federal government amend the British North America Act (June 1940) to allow Parliament to pass the Unemployment Insurance Act. The UI Act came into effect January 1941.



Although unable to win a large number of Commons seats, the CCF nevertheless was responsible for forcing the federal government to produce progressive legislation.

"We, therefore, look to the establishment in Canada of a new social order which will substitute a planned and socialized economy for the existing chaotic individualism, and which, by achieving an approximate economic equality among men in place of the present glaring inequalities, will eliminate the domination of one class by another," said Woodsworth. (Christian et al 1974, p.130).

He dreamed this movement would one day form a government.



Soll drifting on road near Caron.



Conditions in the 1930s left farmers devastated. Drought and low wheat prices caused low farm incomes. Many were reduced to using Bennett buggies (named for Prime Minister R. B. Bennett), horse-drawn cars with the motors removed, because they could no longer afford gasoline.



# The CCF is Born

In 1921 some farmers from the Ituna, Saskatchewan area formed the Farmers' Union of Canada. These farmers strongly believed they were looking in the wrong places for solutions to recurrent agrarian problems. The farmers appealed to governments, federal and provincial, but got no results.

The Farmers' Union of Canada "advocated that farmers take direct action in marketing of farm products. Its success in launching the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool in 1924 tremendously enhanced both the membership and the prestige of the Farmers' Union." (Eager 1980, p.52)

The agrarian population had an unlikely ally - the labourites.

Farmers were disillusioned by politics and politicians. Farm communities were disintegrating under the pressure of high prices. [Labour was on the defensive against government dominated by employers.]

In 1926 the Saskatchewan Grain Growers' Association and the Farmers' Union of Canada joined forces to



Discontented farmers began to organize, some into political parties and others into economic groups. One of the strongest of these, the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool, got enough support in the form of contracts to begin a new and fairer method of marketing wheat.

**Constitution and Bylaws**  
of  
**The Farmers' Union of**  
**Canada**

1925



One Aim, One Bond, One Brotherhood

1925

Farmers' groups, such as the Farmers' Union of Canada and the United Farmers of Canada (Saskatchewan Section) joined forces to deal with common problems.



form the United Farmers of Canada (Saskatchewan Section). That same year the radicals of the United Farmers' of Canada formed the Farmers' Educational League of Saskatchewan. A similar group had been formed in Alberta in 1924.

While these farmers were organizing various farmers' political associations, people in urban centres organized the Independent Labour Party of Saskatchewan. M. J. Coldwell became president.

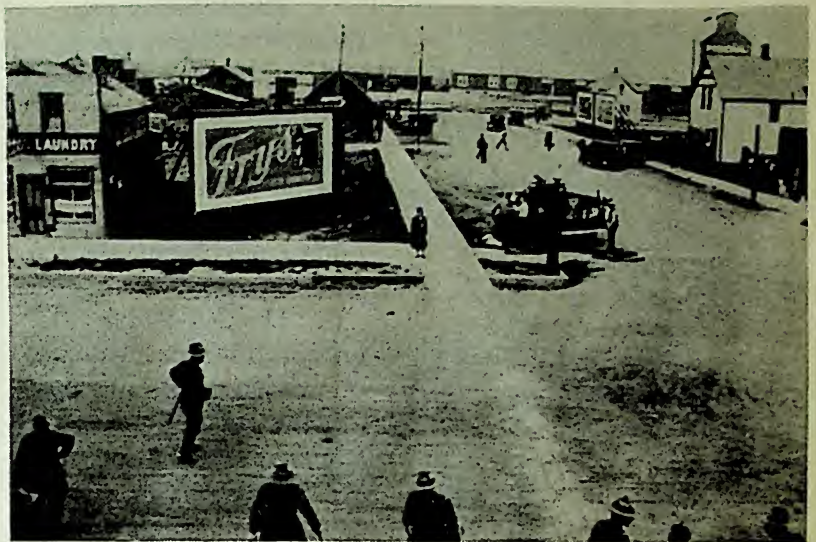
The ILP held a meeting in Saskatoon in July 1932. The non-political

United Farmers of Canada, under George H. Williams, was meeting in Saskatoon at the same time.

Each group adopted a political program "almost identical in every particular. Thus, before the adjournment of the Labour convention, the United Farmers suggested that a joint meeting be held to discuss ways and means of co-operation. This resulted in the formation of the Farmer-Labour Party and the election of a provincial leader." (Coldwell et al 1945, p.3)

Williams nominated Coldwell as party leader, and the Regina school teacher was elected.

Everything began to fall into place August 1, 1932 at the Labour Temple in Calgary, Alberta, where the Western Labour Conference was to meet. However, something bigger was taking place. Joining labour from British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Ontario were the United Farmers of Alberta and the Farmer-Labour Party of Saskatchewan.



**The Depression made conditions for workers, which were already bad, worse. When miners from the coal mine near Estevan went on strike in 1931, police were sent in to stop a protest march. A riot resulted. Three miners were shot and killed by the police.**



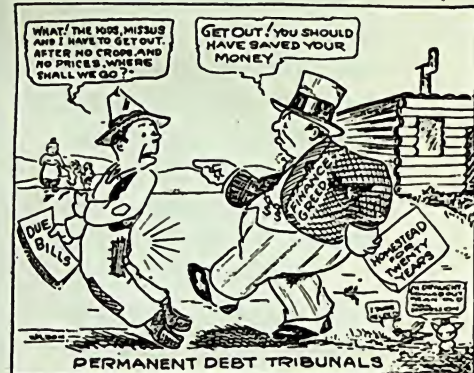
This meeting produced the *Calgary Programme* and a new national party, the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation (Farmer-Labour-Socialist). Woodsworth was named party leader before the meeting ended.

The *Calgary Programme* called for "co-operation between the member organizations and to correlate their political activities," to establish in Canada "a Co-operative Commonwealth in which the basic principle regulating production, distribution and exchange will be the supplying of human needs instead of making profits." (Christian et al 1974, p.131)

In the *Anatomy of a Party: The National CCF 1932-61*, Young wrote:

*"The men who met in Calgary in 1932 in the winter of their discontent were not revolutionaries in the ordinary sense. They did not want to overturn the system entirely; they wanted to reform it along the lines dictated by the social gospel and the doctrines of Fabian socialism. To achieve their goals they had decided to become a political party, competing with the 'old-line parties' only as a painful necessity. From the beginning they showed a determination to resist the forces that would destroy the individual groups they had built up by submerging them in a larger party. Their eyes were firmly fixed on the establishment of the co-operative commonwealth because they had learned that the existing system could guarantee them nothing." (Young 1969, p.36)*

## IS YOUR HOME SAFE?



"Under The Old Party System Of Government."



"Under The Farmer-Labor (C.C.F.) Government."  
Cover of a Farm-Labour pamphlet



# Regina Manifesto

There was no turning back. Following the successful meeting in Calgary in 1932, social democrats held a national convention in Regina in July 1933.

Amidst the gloom of economic depression and drought was born the *Regina Manifesto*.

It included a daring program; daring considering the abhorrent conditions which faced the country, particularly the West.

The Co-operative Commonwealth Federation Program adopted at the Regina meeting started out:

"The CCF is a federation of organizations whose purpose is the establishment in Canada of a Co-operative Commonwealth in which the principle regulating production, distribution and exchange will be the supplying of human needs and not the making of profits." (Coldwell et al 1945, p.209)

The eight-point program of the *Regina Manifesto* included the following themes: 1. Economic; 2. Nationalization; 3. Public Utilities; 4. Natural Resources; 5. Security of Tenure for Farmers; 6. A National Labour Code; 7. Socialized Health Services; 8. Greatly increased economic powers for the central government.

The *Regina Manifesto* concluded with:

"No CCF Government will rest content until it has eradicated capitalism and put into operation the full programme of socialized planning which will lead to the establishment in Canada of the Co-operative Commonwealth." (Coldwell et al 1945, p.221)

With the difficult preparatory work of the *Calgary Programme* and *Regina Manifesto* behind them, the CCF turned their attention to other battles. These were the 1934 Saskatchewan election and the 1935 Federal election.

## FARMER-LABOR DECLARATION OF POLICY

Our Slogan—"HUMANITY FIRST"

### DECLARATION OF POLICY

Official Manifesto of the  
SASKATCHEWAN  
FARMER-LABOR  
GROUP

Issued by the Farmer-Labor Political Executive

Printed by The Cosmos Printing Co., Regina.

Our party has a long tradition of presenting the electorate with a written policy statement outlining goals and objectives. It began in 1934.



# The Early Years



First Provincial Caucus 1934: Under leader George H. Williams, these five CCF members opposed the ineffective policies of the Liberal governments of J. G. Gardiner and W. J. Patterson.

As a result of the evolution of agrarian protest movements over many years and the problems brought on by drought and depression, the Farmer-Labour Party won five seats in the 1934 Saskatchewan election to become the official opposition.

However, party leader M. J. Coldwell, was defeated in his bid to win a seat in the Legislature. Also defeated was a young minister from Weyburn, T. C. (Tommy) Douglas.

George Williams (Wadena) "emerged after the 1934 election as the most influential leader" (Lewis H. Thomas, "The CCF Victory in Saskatchewan, 1944", *Saskatchewan History*, 34 [Winter 1981]:7) of social democracy in Saskatchewan.

Joining Williams in the Saskatchewan Legislature were: Louis Henry Hantleman (Kindersley), Andrew James Macauley (Cut Knife), Clarence Stork (Shaunavon) and Herman Henry Kemper (Gull Lake).



Williams became Leader of the Opposition in 1935, in addition to being president of the Farmer-Labour Party and director of the party newspaper, *The Saskatchewan Commonwealth*.

Another change was to take place. The United Farmers of Canada and the Independent Labour Party of Saskatchewan supported the Farmer-Labour Party until 1935, at which time the United Farmers of Canada withdrew from politics. The Saskatchewan organization changed its name to the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation, the same as the federal party.

During the federal election of 1935, Douglas and Coldwell were among the seven CCF candidates elected to the House of Commons. Douglas represented Weyburn. Coldwell represented Rosetown-Biggar. Upon victory in the federal election, Coldwell resigned as leader of the Saskatchewan CCF. He became leader of the federal CCF following the death of Woodsworth in 1942.

The next battle for the Saskatchewan CCF came in 1938.

William J. Patterson had succeeded James G. Gardiner as Saskatchewan Liberal leader but Patterson represented little change. The Liberals were bankrupt of workable ideas. They focused their attention on stamping out 'socialism' instead of governing.

The 1938 election proved to be both good and bad for the Saskatchewan CCF. The party doubled its representation in the Legislature from five to ten seats. However, the CCF dropped five points in popular vote.

## For ALDERMAN



## C. M. FINES

1940 Regina Civic Election:  
CCFers like Clarence Fines held  
civic office, gaining political experi-  
ence and spreading the ideas of the  
new party.



## Date With Destiny

In a few years the vision of social democrats would become a permanent part of Canadian history. There was still a lot of work to do but the people of Saskatchewan were caught up in a movement that was gaining momentum each day. The public was looking for answers to economic and social problems. People began to believe the CCF could and would deliver.

As World War II intensified, both Williams and Douglas enlisted. Williams went overseas in 1942. He had resigned in 1941 as president of the Saskatchewan CCF, but he maintained his position as leader of the party.

At the 1942 provincial convention CCF delegates concluded that the party needed a leader to prepare for the next election. It would be impossible for Williams to do so while he was in Europe.



The CCF campaigned vigorously in the 1944 provincial election promising a bright future for everyone. With Douglas are C. M. Fines (left) and CCF MP Clarle Gillis from Nova Scotia (right).



T. C. Douglas was beckoned home from Ottawa, "literally dragged into a leadership contest." (Thomas, *Saskatchewan History*, 34 [Winter 1981]:7). Douglas and Tisdale MLA John H. Brockelbank were nominated for the leadership. Brockelbank withdrew and instead nominated the absentee Williams. Douglas won easily.

The war effort in Canada injected some life into a failing economy, but that was not enough. As might be expected the Patterson government did little to improve matters in Saskatchewan. The Liberals were unable - perhaps even unwilling - to improve the lot of the ordinary people. Economic and agricultural chaos combined with the Patterson government's extension (by one year) of its term in office sealed the fate of the Liberal administration.

Under the leadership of Douglas the CCF began to plan strategy.

The party proposed to: stop foreclosures and eviction from the home quarter; encourage development of the co-operative movement; develop health services; raise old age pensions; establish vocational guidance clinics; reform the penal system; establish larger school units; establish programs to assist qualified students to attend university; revise the school curriculum; guarantee freedom of speech, elections and religion; develop economic life and social ownership of natural resources; and eliminate patronage in the civil service.

The Liberal government finally set June 15, 1944 as election day in Saskatchewan.

Volleys were fired by both sides; the old-line parties and the media attempted to discredit the CCF.

The pro-Liberal, Regina *Leader-Post* stated in an editorial:

"A definite trend in the country away from the CCF is now under way. The fortunes of the CCF party reached their zenith last autumn and are sliding back due to a number of factors that have developed since last fall."  
(*Leader-Post* 1 February 1944)



In the same issue of that paper columnist Vic Mackie wrote:

"The political winds have shifted and are now favoring the Liberal party...that party is now confident that the CCF will receive a rude shock when the people make their final decision and mark their ballots." (*Leader-Post* 1 February 1944)

Lewis H. Thomas wrote in *Saskatchewan History*:

"As the campaign wore on, the Liberals became apprehensive and resorted to calling the CCF Nazis or National Socialist. In the Legislature, the Minister of Education referred to the CCF 'as a proper cesspool and a political sewer which fails to conform to its Hitlerite prototype only in its lack of the swastika and the goose-step.' The Liberal-dominated daily press augmented party propaganda with repeated assertions of the following type: 'If the CCF Socialists proceed immediately to bring into being their socialist program they must intend to reject and remove all vestige of democracy.' The Liberals were openly aided in their effort by agents of mortgage companies, who predicted that the farmers would lose their land if the CCF were elected." (Thomas, *Saskatchewan History*, 34 [Winter 1981]:10)



M. J. Coldwell, national leader from 1942 to 1960, took part in the 1944 campaign.



# The Douglas Years

By the time the final ballot was counted the CCF won 47 of 52 seats, earning 53 percent of the popular vote, in the June 15, 1944 election.

Elected were 30 farmers, one woman involved in farming, six trade unionists, at least eight teachers and the others represented various businesses and callings.

Douglas and his team had made the right decisions to earn electoral success. Now the CCF team had to make the right decisions to revive the gloomy social and economic fortunes of Saskatchewan. The province was nearly bankrupt.

The next day the Regina *Leader-Post* displayed a bold headline - **DECISIVE C.C.F. VICTORY** - under which it reported: "A decisive victory in Thursday's provincial election was scored by the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation which up until noon Friday had won 41 seats, with the possibility of adding five more by the time final results are tabulated. The landslide for the CCF was one of the greatest in the annals of Saskatchewan's political



When the votes were counted on June 15, 1944 the CCF had a sweeping victory, and took over the Government of Saskatchewan, the first socialist party to win in North America.

history." (*Leader-Post* 16 June 1944)

During the next 20 years in government the CCF fulfilled "virtually all its promises. It collected a team of brilliant civil servants and put them to work to restore and diversify the province's economy, setting firsts in



Canada for hospital, health and automobile insurance and in welfare and labour legislation, creating publicly-owned industries, some of which failed, most of which proved to be successful. Moreover, the CCF in Saskatchewan managed to maintain the unique grass roots organization which had carried it to power. The CCF in government remained accountable to its members and supporters," wrote Desmond Morton. (1974, p. 15)

Douglas was a dynamic personality. He surrounded himself with a group of able cabinet ministers - people like Clarence M. Fines (Regina City), John W. Corman (Moose Jaw City), John H. Brockelbank (Tisdale), Woodrow S. Lloyd (Biggar), and Charles C. Williams (Regina City).



**First CCF Cabinet Meeting, July 1944:**

Douglas chose his cabinet from an able, dedicated group. This photo shows their first meeting after the election. Clockwise from the premier are: J. W. Corman, C. C. Williams, L. F. McIntosh, J. H. Sturdy, W. S. Lloyd (hands only), J. T. Douglas, J. L. Phelps, O. W. Valleau, J. H. Brockelbank, G. H. Williams, C. M. Fines.



They began drafting progressive and productive legislation. Douglas had taken the reins of government July 10, 1944. The CCF government called its first session of the Legislative Assembly on October 19, 1944.



Beatrice Trew was the first woman CCF MLA. Elected in 1944 she represented Maple Creek. In 1986 her grandson Kim Trew was elected to represent Regina North.

Williams, Minister of Labour (and former mayor of Regina), piloted the Trade Union Act through the Legislature. Coldwell called it "the most advanced piece of labour legislation of its kind." (Coldwell et al 1945, p.159)

This was followed by the Annual Holidays Act, whereby, other than some farm help, "every employee is entitled to an annual holiday of two weeks after each year of employment." (Coldwell et al 1945, p.162)

A new Minimum Wage Board "which has increased the minimum standards to be paid in cities and towns for a forty-eight hour week" was established. (Coldwell et al 1945, p.162)

Next on the agenda was the Farm Security Act which provided "that no farmer can be evicted from his home quarter section of one hundred and sixty acres under a mortgage agreement, and that farmers operating land under mortgages or agreements of sale shall be relieved of making principal payments during crop failure years." (Coldwell et. al 1945, p. 163)

A new Department of Co-operation and Co-operative Development was set up "for the encouragement generally of co-operation and co-operative development



in the province" and particularly to "encourage and assist in the organization of co-operative enterprise" among those who wish to do so "on a non-profit, co-operative self-help basis." (Coldwell et al 1945, p.167)

The Health Services Planning Commission was



An early CCF health measure was the establishment of air ambulance service in 1946. This was the first of a series of health care measures passed by the Douglas government.

established "to ascertain costs of health services decided on, and recommend methods of financing them; outline region boundaries, work out the health needs of several regions and recommend the health services required to meet these needs; recommend better health services for municipalities and local improvement districts where such services are inadequate; plan compulsory health



insurance schemes for several urban centres and help the government plan health services generally," wrote M. J. Coldwell. (1945, p.170)

Saskatchewan inaugurated a provincial air ambulance service on February 3, 1946. A second plane was purchased later in 1946 to serve the northern part of the province. The province took responsibility for the care of the mentally ill. Swift Current Health Region #1 and Weyburn-Estevan Health Region #3 were established in December 1946. Pensioners and their dependents, resident in Saskatchewan, were provided with free medical, dental, hospital and drug services. All citizens were entitled to cancer treatment without cost. Money was set aside in the 1945-46 budget for construction of the College of Medicine at the University of Saskatchewan in Saskatoon.

The Government Insurance Act of 1944 stated expressly that the government "may engage in and carry on the business of insurance" in many areas, the most important of which was automobile insurance. (Coldwell et al 1945, p.176)

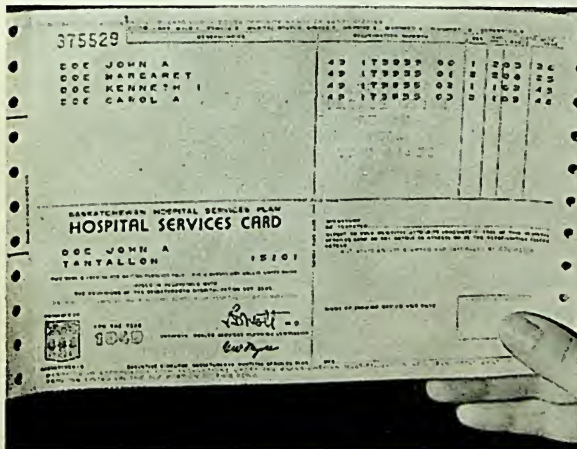
On January 1, 1947 the Saskatchewan Hospitalization Plan came into effect providing hospital care to all Saskatchewan residents, for a small annual fee.

Politicians and the public soon discovered Corman was the party strategist and realist. Fines was labelled as the administrative and financial expert. Douglas was the leader.

"Corman planned them, Fines made the spitballs, and Douglas fired



Government policy included the construction of the College of Medicine at the University of Saskatchewan in Saskatoon. Premier Douglas laid the cornerstone in 1946.



By 1947 the CCF had expanded health services to include low cost (\$5 per person to a maximum of \$30 per family) hospitalization for all Saskatchewan residents, simply by presenting a card like this.





The CCF went to the polls again in 1948 and were returned to office. Their success was based on their programs and the hard work of people like president Dr. Carlyle King and provincial secretary A. O. Smith.



**SGIO Head Office:**  
The government established SGIO to provide low cost, universal automobile insurance coverage.

them," was a favorite line of many observers. (Eager 1980, p.144)

The CCF did not create but in fact inherited two of the province's most conspicuous public enterprises, the telephone company and the power corporation.

A combination of hard work, honesty and innovative legislation gave citizens hope for economic and social resurrection.

"Part of the CCF's success is due to the uncommonly honest tactics of the party in its electioneering and educational work," wrote Eric Estorick in his preface in *Left Turn, Canada*. (Coldwell et al 1945, p.9)

CCF party organization involves "continuous party activity" and "influence from the bottom up." Permanent

activity is achieved by giving party supporters a voice in both central planning and in policy. The key to this success is the combination of democratic procedure with strong centralized control. (Eager 1980, p.72)

There were still those who doubted CCF philosophy. Douglas pretty well extinguished doubts when he addressed the Legislative Assembly in May 1945: "The only freedom the CCF would destroy is the freedom of the few to exploit the many. The only people who need to fear the CCF are those who are seeking to live by the sweat of someone else's brow." (Lovick 1979, p.89)

Much had been accomplished - still more had to be done. Douglas was nearing the end of his first term as premier. He called an election for June 24, 1948.

The CCF was returned to office with 31 seats as compared to the 47 seats won in 1944.

"Victory for the CCF was not so much a gain for government as a victory for the people of Saskatchewan," said Douglas. "We have demonstrated to the rest of Canada that, once having put our hand to the plough, we



have no intention of turning back." (*Leader-Post* 25 June 1948)

"I am delighted with the results...the fact that a larger opposition has been elected will, I believe, make for a livelier and better legislature," commented national CCF leader M. J. Coldwell. (*Leader-Post* 25 June 1948)

"This election should be a lesson to those vested interests and their newspapers who seem to think they can frighten the public into voting against their own interests by raising the bogeyman of communism and regimentation. The people of this province know who their friends are and they know whom they can trust. They have shown by their votes that they desire the CCF to continue their program of providing social security and developing Saskatchewan for the benefit of the people who live here," concluded Douglas. (*Leader-Post* 25 June 1948). He was warming up for another term in office.

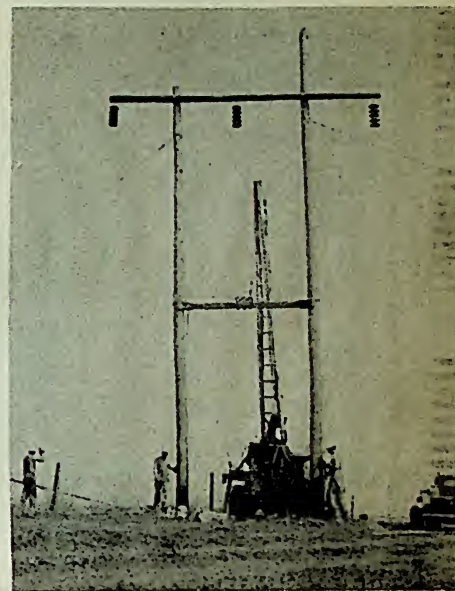
Times were changing. So was the CCF. Social democrats in Saskatchewan had proven beyond the shadow of any doubt that democracy was flourishing.

The CCF government had made life easier for all people in Saskatchewan. Rural electrification brought power to nearly 25,000 farms by 1954. All highways and roads were improved to accommodate newer and better vehicles. Natural gas was piped into Saskatoon and other centres.

By the time the 1956 national CCF convention in Winnipeg was over, members passed the *Winnipeg Declaration of Principles* to replace the *Regina Manifesto*. The declaration called for a mixed economy that endorsed public ownership, co-operative ownership and private ownership.



An admirer of U.S. president Franklin Roosevelt, Premier Douglas borrowed this idea. Some families attended these fireside chats more regularly than church services.



The government embarked on a program of bringing electricity to Saskatchewan farms, carried out by Saskatchewan Power Corporation. SPC crew raising high-tension lines near Shaunavon, May 1956.



# Lloyd & Medicare

December 16, 1959 marked the start of a short period of turbulent Saskatchewan history. That was the day Douglas spoke to the people via radio, announcing "the government's intention of introducing a scheme of medical care insurance based on five principles:

1. Pre-payment;
2. Universal coverage;
3. High-quality service;
4. Administration by the Department of Public Health or by an agency responsible to the government;
5. Acceptability to both those providing and those receiving the service."

(Ward et al 1968, p.238)

"The government would appoint an advisory planning committee to define and recommend a medicare scheme which would best suit Saskatchewan's needs," said Douglas. (Ward et al 1968, p.238)

On October 13, 1961 the CCF government introduced the Medical Care Insurance Act. The bill received royal assent November 17, 1961. Implementation date was set for April 1, 1962, but on April 11 the College of Physicians and Surgeons rejected amendments to the bill.

The debate over medicare developed into a bitter fight. The sides - for and against - formed early. Neighbours refused to speak to each other. Families were torn apart. Friendships deteriorated. There were demonstrations, tauntings and harassment aimed at the proponents of medicare. Government MLAs were on the receiving



In 1961, Douglas left Regina for Ottawa, and was replaced as Saskatchewan premier by Woodrow S. Lloyd, a cabinet colleague since 1944.



## Ron Bishoff Seeks Thunder Creek Nomination

Ron Bishoff was born and raised in the Keeler district. He attended the University of Saskatchewan and completed an Agriculture degree.

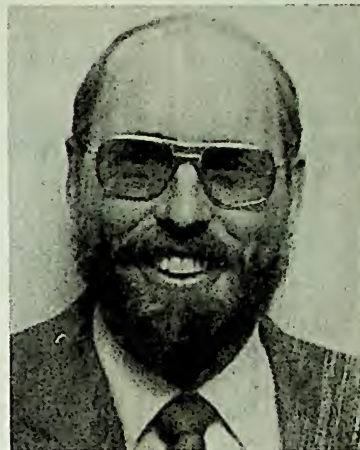
"I watch with growing alarm the changes that have occurred in agriculture and the rural communities in the last ten years, and I'm not prepared to accept these changes.

"If agriculture continues in its present direction I will be the last Bishoff on our family farm as there is no way either of my sons will be able to take over.

"Saskatchewan has almost lost a total generation of farmers. I should be classified as a middle-aged farmer but relatively speaking, I'm still a young

farmer because there are few others younger than myself actively farming today.

"I feel that I can relate to the needs of the farmers in Thunder Creek constituency because I'm in the same struggling category. I look forward to the possibility of representing Thunder Creek in the next election, I look forward to an NDP MLA representing Thunder Creek constituency."



Ron Bishoff

Ron is a strong believer in and promoter of the principles of co-operation and has spent nine years on the Board of Directors of the Moose Jaw Co-op, the last five years as president. He has also been active on Saskatchewan Wheat Pool and CI committees for many years.

Ron and his wife Irene have two sons, Adam 15, and Scott, 14.

## "The 90's Belong to the Left" - Marianne Weston

The party of social conscience that brought Saskatchewan out of the depression, will lead Saskatchewan in the new decade, predicts Marianne Weston, long time party worker and candidate for nomination in the new seat of Regina Lake Centre.

The next NDP government needs the same qualities that gave strength to the Government of T. C. Douglas: a caring heart and a hard head for finance.

Now is the time for the left to

lead, Marianne believes, because the threats that we face to our environment and our economy can't be met unless we co-operate for the good of all.

"A sustainable future for Saskatchewan is one where economic and political decisions must serve people and not the other way around.

"I believe in a whole new kind of decision making, not just more government programs."



Marianne Weston

Asked how she could contribute to this process, Weston cites her experience in helping bring about change through effective organization. "You have to involve people in identifying solutions, and test the possibilities against the criteria of fairness, financial responsibility, and environmental safety. There are no perfect solutions to our problems, but there are best possible ones."

"Our challenge is rebuilding an economy, creating the social framework that makes life better for all, and balancing the books. These are the very things that Tommy Douglas did. Saskatchewan became a world leader. I truly believe that we can lead the left again."



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**Rosthern New Democrats**  
will hold their nomination conven-  
tion on March 9, in the Brian King  
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Registration is at 7:00 p.m.



end of needless and senseless abuse. Families of government MLAs were subjected to vicious treatment. Eventually doctors would go on strike.

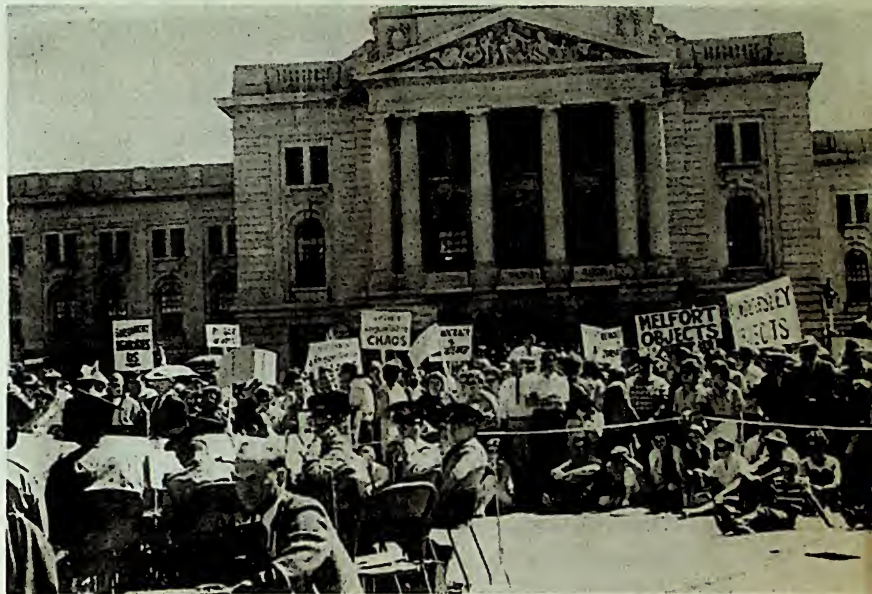
Before Douglas could put the medicare plan into operation he was recruited by the federal CCF party. During the national convention July 31 to August 4, 1961, in Ottawa, the CCF became the New Democratic Party, and Douglas was selected as leader. He resigned as Saskatchewan CCF leader and premier.

On November 7, 1961 Woodrow S. Lloyd succeeded Douglas as leader of the Saskatchewan CCF and premier.

While Douglas was a dynamic personality, Lloyd presented a lower profile. Lloyd "devoted considerable effort in the direction of orderly and systematic process." (Ward et al 1968, p.256)

On April 13, 1962 the government introduced a bill containing amendments to the Saskatchewan Medical Care Insurance Act. Premier Lloyd informed the Legislature "it is the intention of the Government to proceed to introduce a medical care insurance plan designed to meet the needs of our citizens." (Ward et al p.256)

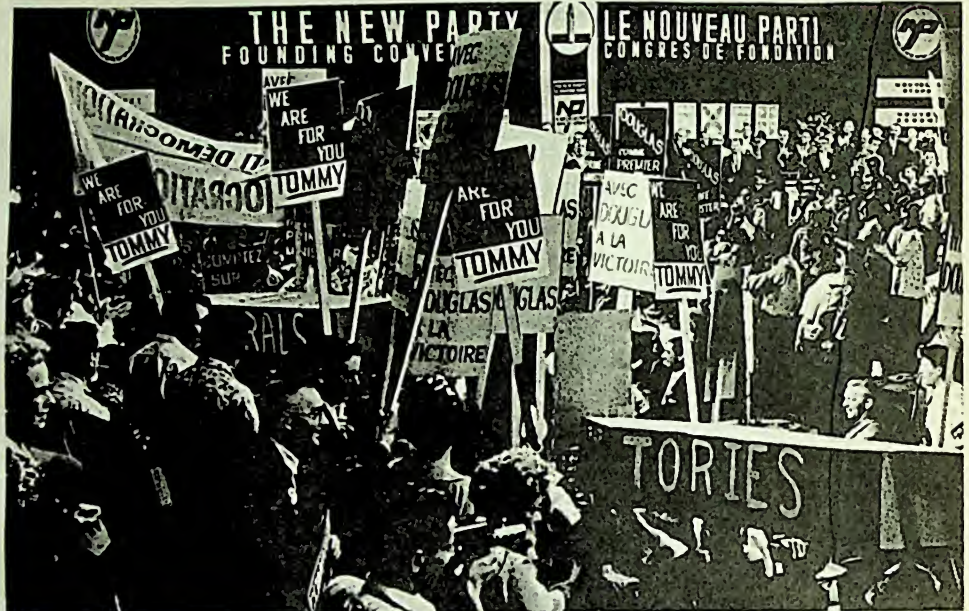
Finally, on July 1, 1962 medicare in Saskatchewan became a reality. It would become the blueprint for medicare plans in Canada.



The Douglas-Lloyd governments' plan to introduce universal medical care insurance caused great public debate including several protest rallies such as this one sponsored by "Keep Our Doctors" (KOD) in July 1962, at the Legislature in Regina. Before the end of the 1960s medicare was a national program and is now a sacred social right. But in the early 1960s, it was hard times for our party. Douglas was soundly defeated in his bid to represent Regina in the House of Commons in 1962. The Lloyd government lost the election to the Liberals in 1964.



## CCF to NDP



In 1961, during the medicare debate, the national CCF party met in convention to merge with organized labor and become the New Democratic Party. Tommy Douglas was elected leader.

The Saskatchewan CCF did not change its name when the federal party did. Change came gradually between 1961 and 1967.

The party fought the October 11, 1967 Saskatchewan election under the CCF-NDP banner. During the provincial convention in Saskatoon, November 1967, the party officially changed its name to the New Democratic Party of Saskatchewan.

The fight to bring in medicare had more than tested the skills and energies of the CCF. Some voters were upset by the CCF push for larger municipal units. By the time the 1964 election was called the party was drained. The Liberals under Ross Thatcher formed the government.

During its two terms in office the Liberal administration embarked on a campaign of self-destruction. The Liberals had promised decreased taxation, better programs for agriculture, increased industrialization and



Lloyd continues to build: Saskatchewan Power Corporation head office under construction in 1963.

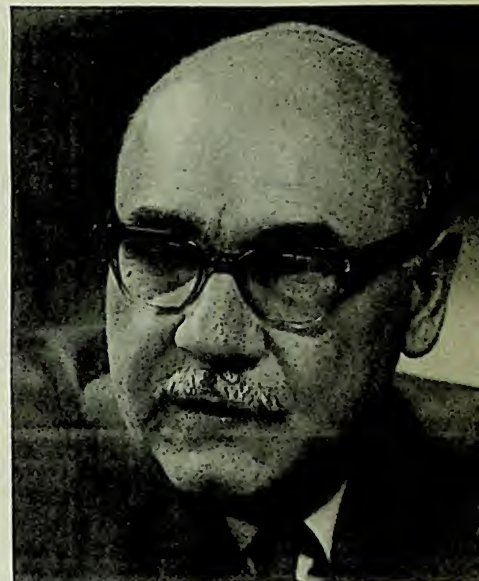


more jobs, free school books and extensions to medicare. They met none of these promises.

The Liberal government "antagonized broad sections of the electorate, including labour, school teachers, hotel owners, hospital boards and rural municipal officers." People were angered by the imposition of deterrent fees for medical services. Federal farm policies angered farmers. Thatcher also angered farmers because he failed to speak out on farm issues. (Eager 1980, p.60)

The "abrasive and heavy-handed way in which the Liberal government had applied its policies and a general feeling of distrust" were the foremost factors in the Liberals' defeat June 23, 1971. (Eager 1980, p.60)

By 1971 the Saskatchewan electorate had had enough of the Liberal government.



Woodrow Lloyd lead the party through elections in 1964 and 1967. In 1967 the party came within 1.2% of the Liberals in popular vote.



Premier Thatcher managed to antagonize just about everyone.



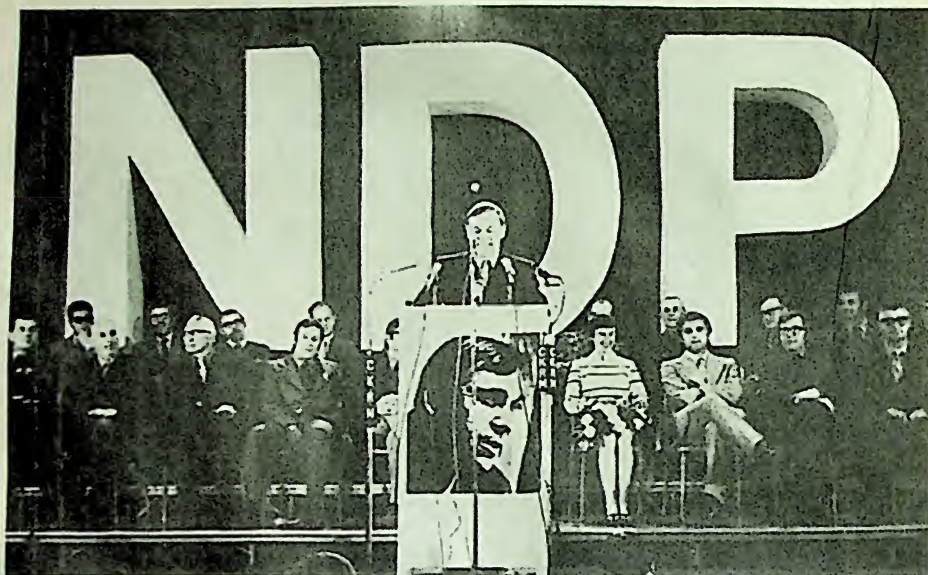
## The Blakeney Years

# NEW DEAL FOR PEOPLE



new democratic party of  
saskatchewan  
program for progress

As part of the 1971 campaign the party issued a detailed platform, with its plans for the decade, called the "New Deal for People". It struck a chord with the electorate and became the legislative framework for the Blakeney government.



By the election of June 1971, the party had new vigor and a new leader, Allan Blakeney, shown here speaking at an election rally in the Regina Armouries.

Lloyd had suffered two successive defeats. He resigned as NDP leader in 1970 and retired from politics.

In July 1970, Allan E. Blakeney won the leadership of the Saskatchewan NDP, following a close contest with Roy Romanow.

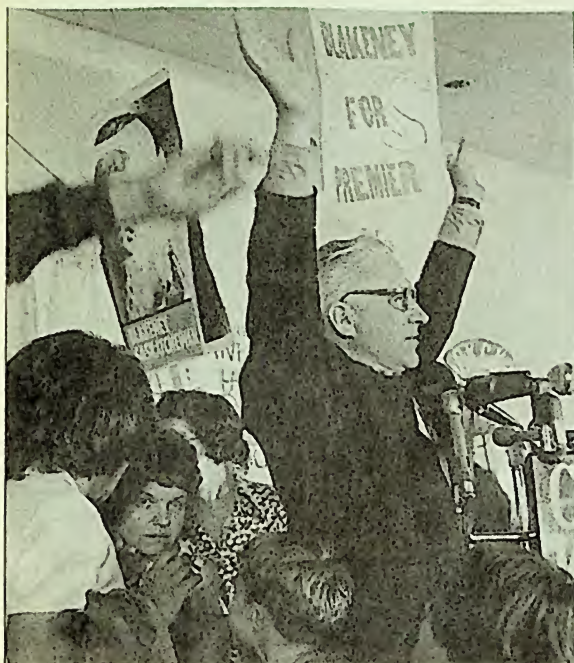
New Democrats looked to Blakeney to lead them to victory. Blakeney was no stranger to Saskatchewan politics. He had worked in the provincial civil service, was elected an MLA in 1960 and served in the cabinets of the Douglas and Lloyd governments. He had participated in the medicare struggle. The success of the NDP was now in his hands.

The dismal record of the Liberal government coupled with a well-organized NDP campaign resulted in Blakeney forming the government in June 1971.

The Blakeney government continued the work of improving social and economic conditions in Saskatchewan.

Medicare was expanded with the addition of the drug prescription plan and the dental plan for school children. Medicare deterrent fees were removed. Chiroprac-





**Victory in 1971: MLA Ed Whelan waves to a jubilant crowd at party headquarters in Regina election night: Liberals 15 seats, NDP 45 seats.**



**The Blakeney government initiated the children's dental plan. Work was done by special trained dental nurses under the supervision of dentists. MLA Mike Feschuk with patient and nurse.**

tic services were covered by medicare. Home care for the elderly was introduced. Electoral reform and bursaries for students were instituted.

The Blakeney government introduced the Human Rights Commission, the Saskatchewan Human Rights Code, rent controls, the Land Bank, the environment department, Legal Aid, the housing corporation and other important social reforms, including progressive amendments to the Trade Union Act.

After winning the 1975 election, the Blakeney administration emphasized public ownership through the Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan and other Crown Corporations such as SaskOil and the Saskatchewan Mining Development Corporation to develop resources.

Throughout this period Blakeney's own profile on the national scene was rising. He was looked on as one of the West's major spokesmen in constitutional talks, and



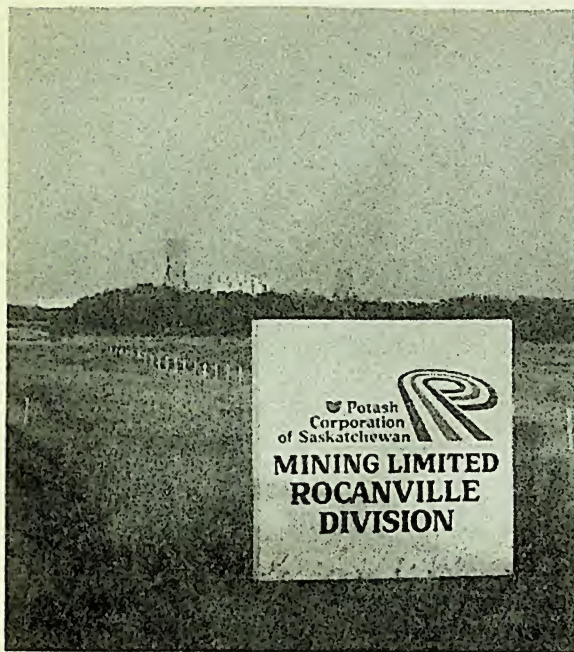


Regina MPs Les Benjamin and John Burton talk with Premier Allan Blakeney and David Lewis, federal leader from 1971 to 1975, during the 1972 federal election campaign. Lewis hammered out his theme of "Corporate Welfare Bums" pointing a finger at corporations that paid little or no tax and the federal government which let them get away with it.



Premier Blakeney played a pivotal role in the federal-provincial and constitutional negotiations of the 1970s. He's seen here with other premiers at a First Ministers Conference in Waskeslu.





A cornerstone of the Blakeney government was the management of our natural resources. SaskOil and the Potash Corporation were two Crown Corporations whose purpose was to bring dividends to the province and act as primary influence in the resource sector.



Ed Broadbent, federal leader from 1975 to 1989, led the NDP to new heights of popularity electing 43 MPs in 1988. He's shown here on a Saskatchewan visit in 1979. Saskatchewan Finance Minister Ed Tchorzewski looks on.

maintained his own reputation as a fighter for Saskatchewan in frequent clashes with Ottawa. (Saskatoon *Star Phoenix* 8 August 1976)

In 1973 the Saskatchewan and federal governments disagreed over the imposition of royalties to be received from natural resources such as gas, oil and potash.

A 1930 Federal-Provincial Agreement stated in part: "In order that the Province may be in the same position as the original provinces in Confederation...the interest of the crown in all crown lands, mines, minerals (precious and base) and royalties derived therefrom within the Province, and all sums due payable for such lands, mines, mineral or royalties, shall...belong to the province." (Saskatchewan Natural Resources Act, C.41, 1930)





At the opening of Tommy Douglas House in 1981: Delaine Scotton (party president from 1979 to 1984), Allan Blakeney, Anne Blakeney, Tommy, Irma Douglas, and Alvin Hewitt (provincial party president from 1971 to 1977 and federal president from 1977 to 1981). In the background: Marjorie Cooper Hunt, Carl Edy, and Ron Thompson.

In 1977 and 1978 the Supreme Court of Canada placed limitations on what Saskatchewan had assumed to be provincial benefits from natural resources like oil, gas and potash. It determined that "tax levies on oil and gas on which Saskatchewan had imposed were indirect and beyond the power of the province to levy."

"The government [of Saskatchewan] saw the decision as a mockery of its presumed control of natural resources," wrote Evelyn Eager. (1980, p.42)

Following another win in 1978 the Blakeney government perhaps took for granted it could reel off another "Douglas era." However, that would not happen.

The NDP government had offended traditional support. Rural seats that the CCF held since 1934 and urban seats held since 1944 went Tory in the 1982 election. (Regina *Leader-Post* 22 August 1987)

The breakdown in communications - the failure to listen to the party faithful - proved to be disastrous.

The NDP appeared to stray from its recognized course of fighting elections on issues. The party paid less attention to the farming sector, and it upset labour.



Blakeney's government suffered a crushing defeat in 1982, winning just eight of 64 seats. The electorate sent a clear message - it would no longer tolerate an insensitive government.

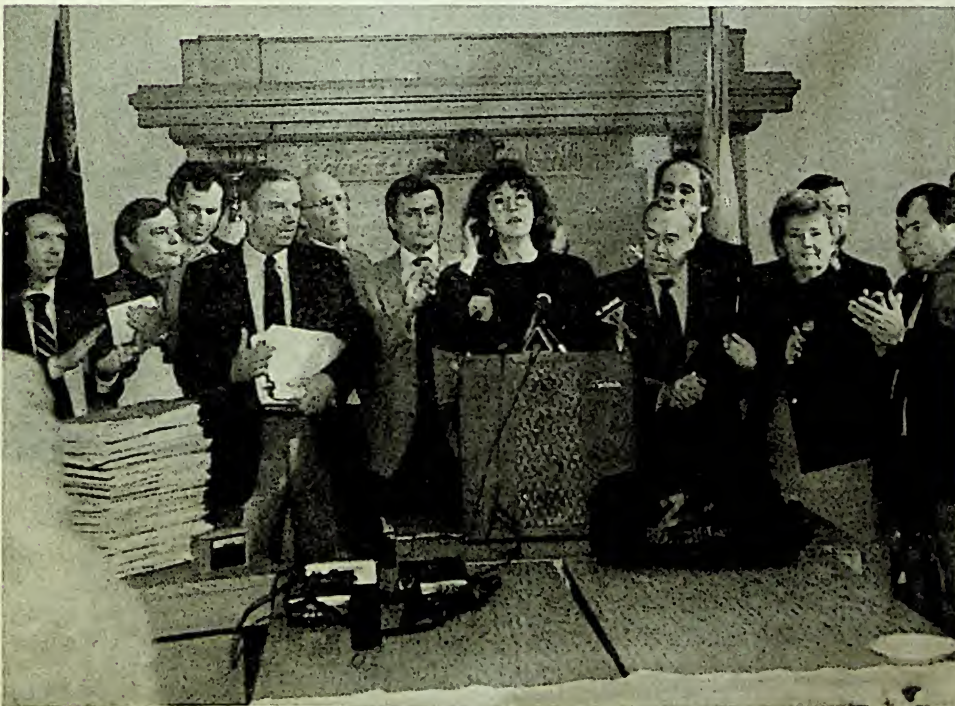
"Clearly, errors were made, errors were made for which I take complete responsibility. It is very clear that we were not responding to the aspirations and expectations of the people of Saskatchewan," Blakeney said after the defeat. (*Regina Leader-Post* 6 November 1987)

New Democrats prepared for another election. Blakeney based his campaign around the Progressive Conservative government's mismanagement of provincial affairs and finances.

The NDP pointed at Tory sales of provincial assets at fire-sale prices - such as the \$6 million sale of \$40 mil-



With only eight members the NDP Opposition set about the formidable task of making the Conservative government accountable. Seen here, Dwain Lingenfelter signs in as an Opposition member with legislative clerk Gordon Barnhart.



In 1987 the Conservative government cancelled the children's Dental Plan, moving dental health care for rural children from automatic to inconvenient, and throwing 400 dental nurses out of work. Here Health Critic Pat Atkinson, surrounded by caucus colleagues, presents a stack of petitions protesting the government's action.





Throughout the PC administration there were protests from farmers, unions, environmentalists and welfare rights groups. The government responded with either vague promises or bandaid solutions.

lion worth of highway equipment; the sale of the Poplar River coal mine to out-of-province interests; and the sale of SaskTel's interests in the Cornwall Centre in Regina. The Tories cut services in most areas of government, causing layoffs and hardship.

Saskatchewan cannot afford the high unemployment, record tax increases, massive deficits and costly corporate give-aways, the NDP warned.



The New Democrats won 25 seats in the 1986 election, although the party received a higher percentage of the popular vote than did the winning Conservatives.

On August 7, 1987 Blakeney announced he was stepping down as NDP leader. He had been an MLA since 1960 and in the Saskatchewan public service since 1950.

Blakeney relinquished the leadership on November 7, 1987 and Roy Romanow was acclaimed party leader.

"We've had some good times together, haven't we? Some good times and some sad times," Blakeney told New Democrats at an appreciation banquet. (Regina *Leader-Post* 7 November 1987)

Blakeney praised Romanow and asked for a front-row seat when the new leader would be sworn in as the next premier.

"Show him the same kind of unity, the same kind of loyalty you have shown me over the last 17 years," said Blakeney. (Regina *Leader-Post* 7 November 1987)

Under Blakeney's administration "The building blocks of progress dropped steadily into place with each succeeding year," said former NDP highways minister Eiling Kramer and dean of the Legislature. (Regina *Leader-Post* 7 November 1987)

With the passing of the torch from the old to the new, Saskatchewan New Democrats entered a new era.



The party enjoys good relations with organized labour. Allan Blakeney and Nadine Hunt, Saskatchewan Federation of Labour President from 1978 to 1988, are greeted at an NDP provincial convention.



# Romanow Leads

Romanow was no stranger to Saskatchewan politics. He was first elected in 1967 as MLA for Saskatoon-Riversdale. Romanow served as Blakeney's right-hand

man for 11 years, as deputy premier and attorney general.

A new dimension was added to Romanow's career in 1979 when he was appointed minister of inter-governmental affairs. In that capacity he played a key role in the negotiations that resulted in the patriation of the Canadian Constitution and the creation of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. As a result of his participation in the constitutional debate, Romanow became a national political and media figure. (Regina *Leader-Post* 7 November 1987)

On reflection, Romanow believes the NDP earned that terrible defeat in 1982. "I think in some ways we deserved to

be defeated because we had lost touch," he said. (Regina *Leader-Post* 7 November 1987). Romanow lost his own seat as the NDP was swept from office but he came back to win by a comfortable margin in 1986. A year later he was Leader of the Opposition.

"I'm reaching out to you today and asking you to join me and to join us as we work together to build a new tomorrow," said Romanow. (Regina *Leader-Post* 8 November 1987)



Roy and Eleanore Romanow acknowledge the ovation they receive as he is elected leader in 1987. Romanow is the sixth leader of the Saskatchewan CCF-NDP.



Part of Romanow's rebuilding bid has been aided by the Tories. The Tories have sent Saskatchewan sliding into an economic and social abyss, thanks to a gigantic deficit, increased unemployment and increased taxation.

The Tories tampered with the drug prescription plan, the school dental plan and social services. They dismantled the highways department and the Land Bank. Many civil servants lost their jobs. The Tories dismantled the Public Utilities Review Commission, which they had themselves created. Unprecedented patronage appointments were the order of the day.



#### Hidden Face:

Under the PCs, civil servants, Crown Corporation employees and anyone doing business for or with the government found themselves unable to publicly criticize Conservative policies. They all feared loss of income.

The Tory scenario is much worse than that the Saskatchewan electorate witnessed during the Liberal years.

Romanow sees the party spending the next while developing new policies to take to the people of Saskatchewan in the next election.

The next job for the New Democratic Party will be to return stability to the provincial economy and social programs.



Audrey McLaughlin and Roy Romanow at the December 1989 convention, in Winnipeg, which saw her elected as federal leader.



## How the Party Works



The party has always encouraged young members, such as those at this Co-operative Commonwealth Youth Movement (CCYM) camp at Crystal Lake in 1941 or those...

The governing body of the Saskatchewan NDP is the annual convention. In between conventions, the responsible governing body is the Council.

Provincial Council meets at least twice yearly to review the activities of the executive. If the need arises, council is empowered to fill executive vacancies and elect an interim leader.

The Provincial Executive, which is elected at convention, must meet at the very least bi-monthly.



...who listen to Roy Romanow at 1989's Saskatchewan Young New Democrats camp at Crystal Lake.



The executive is responsible for conducting the affairs of the party as directed by convention and council. The executive is made up of the leader, the president, five vice-presidents, the treasurer, the past president, five members elected at large by and from provincial council, one MLA, one Saskatchewan New Democratic Women representative, one member from the Aboriginal New Democrats of Saskatchewan, one member from the Saskatchewan Young New Democrats and the president of the federal NDP if he/she is from Saskatchewan.

The Chief Executive Officer (Provincial Secretary) is the party's chief administrative officer. He/she sits on the provincial executive and is hired by this body.

The party leader is the chief spokesperson for the party. He/she leads the party's legislative caucus. The party leader is elected (or re-elected) at the party's annual provincial convention.

Annual provincial conventions are working conventions. Delegates debate resolutions, programs, party constitution and leadership. Debate of resolutions is one of the most important powers party members have over party policy.

Party policy and constitution can only be changed at the provincial convention (federal conventions deal with federal policy, federal constitution, federal leadership and election of federal officers).

Party membership provides a small portion of funding. The rest of the funding comes from generous contributions from individuals, from associations and businesses and from affiliated unions. All donations are eligible for tax deduction receipts. Members may choose a pre-authorized monthly chequing plan to donate party funds.

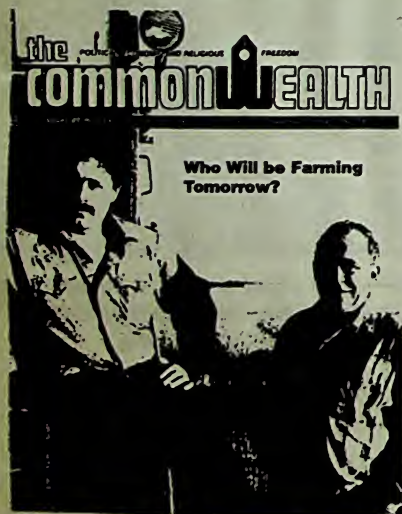


**Members of the NDP caucus spend much of their time meeting and talking with voters. Here Seniors Critic Anne Smart talks with Ryrie Lyall of Semans.**





Provincial Council is made up of one male and one female representative from each constituency. It acts as the party's governing body between conventions, meeting four or five times a year. The above picture is from a 1982 council meeting at Tommy Douglas House.



The party realized early the value of communicating with its members. The Commonwealth began publishing in 1936 and is now published 12 times a year.

The Saskatchewan New Democratic Party is open to all provincial residents who support social democratic principles and policy. They cannot belong to another political party.

The party member becomes a member of the provincial and federal constituency in which he/she lives.

The Saskatchewan Young New Democrats is open to all provincial residents 13 to 25 years of age.

The constituency association forms a basic unit of the party, with responsibilities to recruit members, organize educa-

tion, promote party objectives in the constituency and organize for election campaigns.

A New Democratic Party member has the right:

- to speak freely and openly and vote at general meetings of their constituency association and any other New Democratic Party clubs or organizations in which they are members.
- to stand for election as a delegate for party convention or council representing their constituency association.
- to vote at a meeting held for the purpose of nominating a candidate for their constituency association.
- to stand for election as a member of the executive of their constituency association.
- to seek nomination as a candidate for a federal or provincial constituency association.



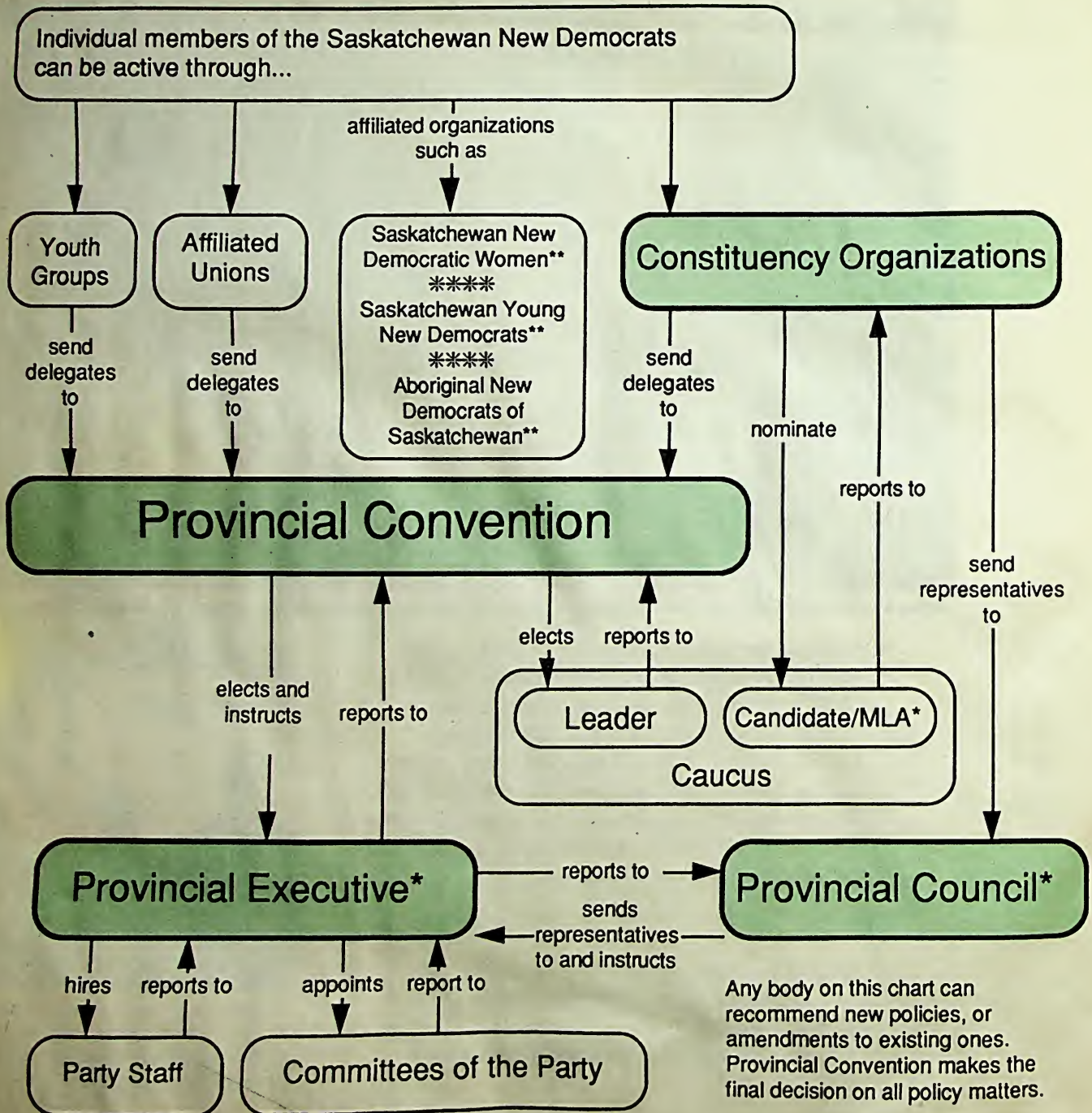


Groups in the party include New Democratic Women, seen here listening to a speech by Allan Blakeney.

- to stand for election as an officer of the party.
- to propose amendments to the program of the party and amendments to the constitution.
- to participate in the national NDP through his/her federal association. A member of the Saskatchewan NDP can carry out the same functions federally as he/she can provincially – elect members to the NDP national council, elect delegates to the national council, etc.



# Party Organization



\*automatic delegates to provincial convention

\*\*the executives of these organizations are automatic delegates to provincial convention

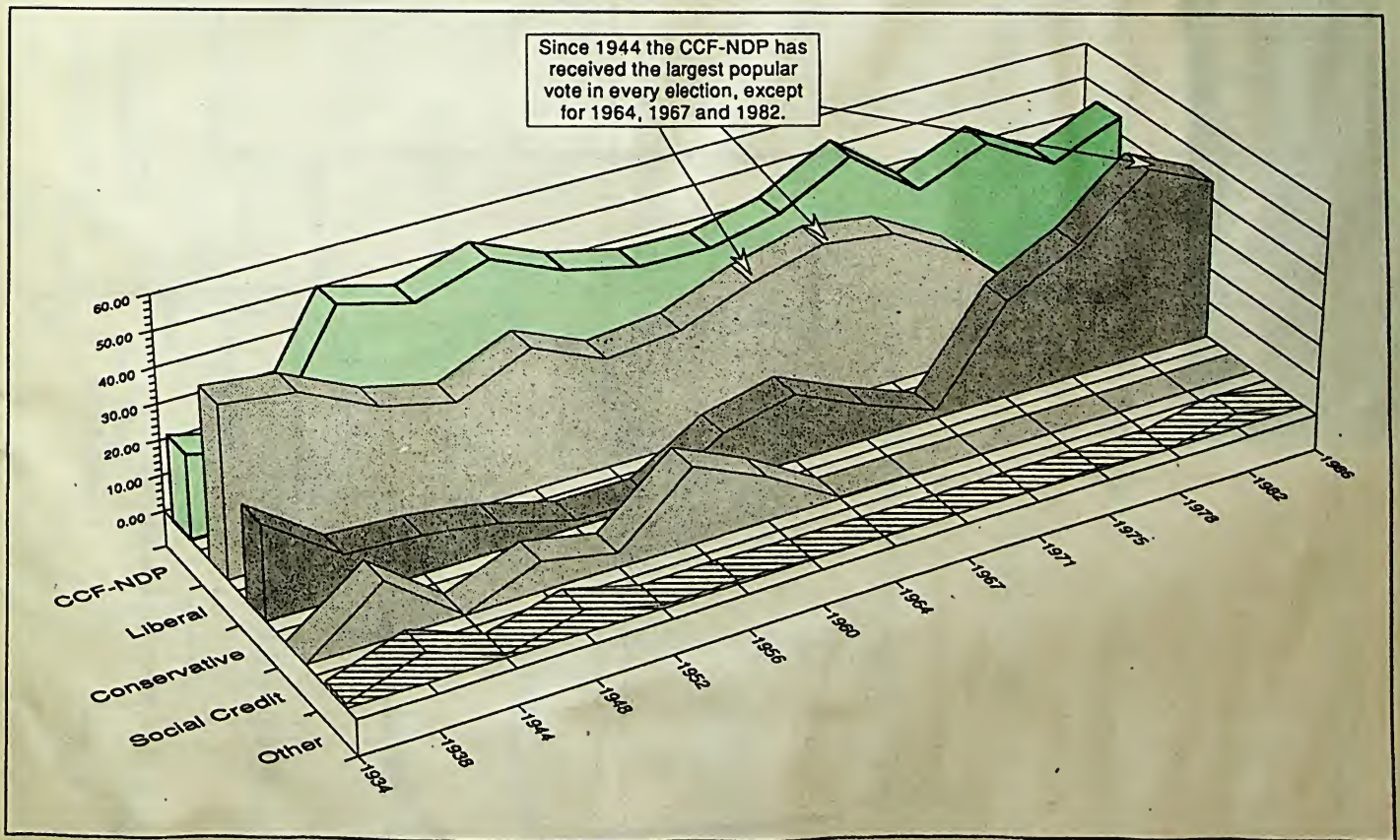


# Electoral Results

## Seats in the Legislature Following Saskatchewan General Elections Since 1934

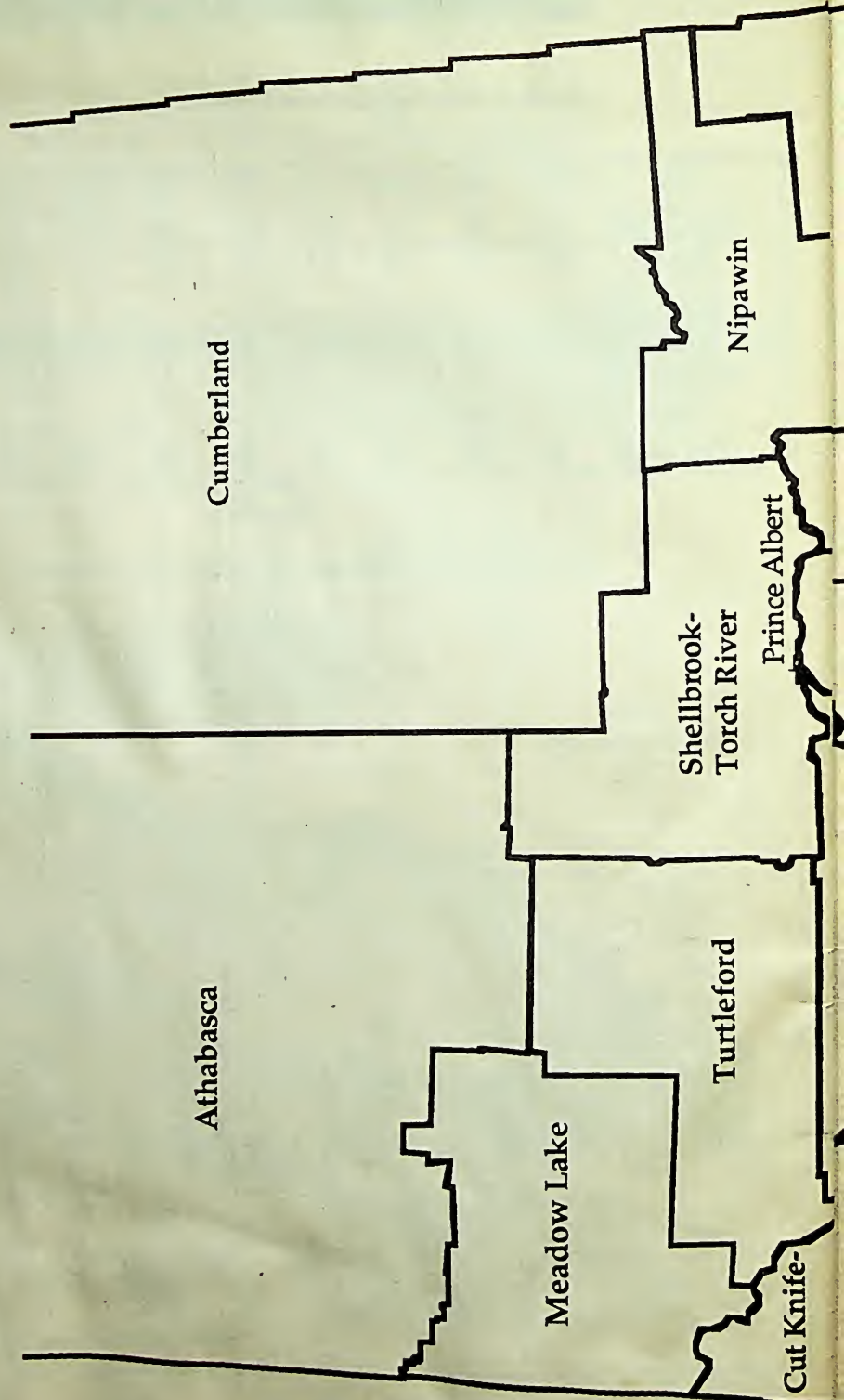
Year	1934	1938	1944	1948	1952	1956	1960	1964	1967	1971	1975	1978	1982	1986
Government	LIB	LIB	CCF	CCF	CCF	CCF	CCF	LIB	LIB	NDP	NDP	NDP	PC	PC
Liberal	50	38	5	19	11	14	17	32	35	15	15	-	-	1
Conservative	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	7	17	56	38
CCF-NDP	5	10	47	31	42	36	38	26	24	45	39	44	8	25
Social Credit	-	2	-	-	-	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other	-	2	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Seats	55	52	52	52	53	53	55	59	59	60	61	61	64	64

## Popular Vote in Saskatchewan General Elections Since 1934





# Saskatchewan

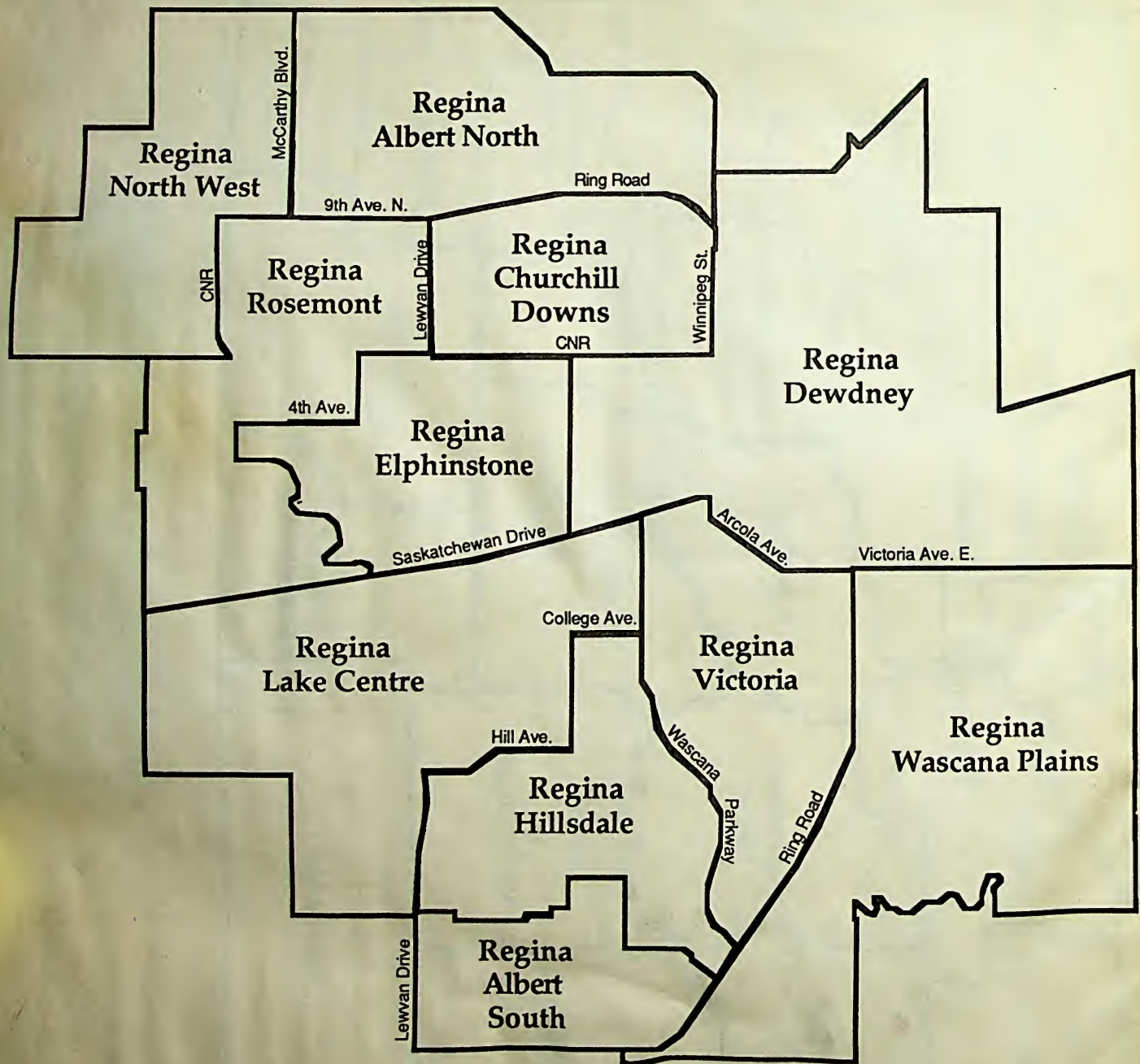








# Regina





# Saskatoon





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